

Be Sure You Know Current Airline Procedures, Restrictions

If you are traveling by air, it is very important that you go to the airline's Web site the day before your departure to verify the current airport check-in procedures and baggage restrictions. Because of frequent changes in airport security, airlines are adjusting their procedures and restrictions frequently.

One recent change limits baggage weight on domestic flights to 50 pounds or less. If your bag weighs over 50 pounds, you will have to pay an excess baggage fee to the ticket agent. Once the agent has checked your bag, it is too late to adjust the weight of the bag to avoid paying the fee. Bags over 100 pounds will not be accepted.

Excess baggage fees vary by airline, but commonly will average \$25 per bag for luggage weighing more than 50 pounds and \$50 each for bags weighing more than 70 pounds.

As a result, it may not be the best option to bring home books, binders, and other heavy items from conferences and meetings. Travelers may want to consider shipping those items to their offices if they will make the bags too heavy. Many hotels have shipping facilities on-site.

Airlines also charge an excess baggage fee for oversize items. Bags cannot exceed 62 inch limits (length + height + width). Items over 80 inches total will not be accepted.

You can help to avoid paying the excess baggage fees by making sure that everything you pack is a necessary item. →



Follow These Guidelines When Using Self-Service Check-In

Airlines are finding more ways to allow travelers to avoid waiting in line to check in at the airport. If you decide to use one of the forms of self-service check-in, here are some guidelines to help the process go more smoothly:

- ✓ Have a major credit card ready for the card reader to use for identification only (nothing will be billed to your card), **or** use the new Utah driver's license with the magnetic strip in the card reader (the old style licenses do not work).
- ✓ You still need to show a photo ID.
- ✓ Delta travelers who have complicated itineraries or who need to make changes should use the Delta Direct phones instead of waiting in line.
- ✓ If you are traveling with carry-on luggage only and have access to a computer, some airlines allow you to check in from their Web sites and to print your boarding pass up to 24 hours before your scheduled flight. →



Be Sure It's an Emergency Before Using After-Hours Line

Our after-hours emergency phone line is a great asset, but travelers need to remember some important things about how and when to use this phone line. Call the **after-hours emergency line** (1-800-860-7816) only when the State Travel office is closed, 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. weekdays, or on weekends and holidays. For emergencies during business hours, call our **daytime emergency line** at 801-537-9124. However, before using either of these phone numbers be sure the situation is actually an emergency.

For **routine business** 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, call the State Travel Office at 801-538-3350.

Do's & Don'ts

Your agency's CTA account will automatically be charged \$36 if you use the after-hours emergency line when the State Travel Office is open, or \$15 if you use the after-hours line after business hours. Also remember that any time a ticket is issued, whether it is through the after-hours emergency line, the daytime emergency line, or the State Travel Office, the agency will pay a \$25 service fee. Most importantly, remember that **you should not use the after-hours emergency line for routine business or during regular State Travel Office business hours.**

Emergencies

If you are not sure what constitutes a travel emergency, here are some examples of reasons you **should** call the after-hours emergency line (only if State Travel is closed) or the daytime emergency line for assistance:

- Your connecting flight is cancelled.
- You find out at the last minute that you need to take a trip the next day, and the State Travel Office is closed (Get prior approval, including a Travel Authorization number, before calling the after-hours line to make reservations).
- You get to the hotel and they don't have your reservation.
- You become seriously ill while traveling.
- There is a death in your family.
- You get to the airport and the airline can't find your ticket number.

Non-Emergencies

To handle the situations listed below when State Travel is closed, either use the airline's Web site or call the airline. **These situations are not emergencies:**

- You want to upgrade your flight .
- You want to change your seat assignment.
- You want to see if your flight is on time.

For the situations listed below call the State Travel Office during regular business hours. **These situations are not emergencies:**

- You want to check to see if your Frequent Flyer number is in your record.
- You want to make reservations.
- You want to reach the State Travel Office.
- You want to ask for a list of alternative flight times. →

Work With One Travel Agent Until the Trip Is Over

Travel planners, it is to your advantage to work with the same State Travel Office agent all the way through an entire reservation process (air, car, hotel). The main advantage of working with a single agent is that it saves time, both for the agent and the travel planner. In addition, it helps to avoid double booking, which automatically cancels both reservations.

For example, if you call Angie on Monday to hold an airline reservation and then call back on Tuesday to request that the ticket be issued, you should talk to Angie again. If you were to call Mary to complete the transaction, you would have to waste time giving repetitive information like the name, dates, times, etc. It is also possible that Mary would book a second reservation in the same name. Airlines (hotels and car rental companies too) run nightly computer checks to automatically cancel all double bookings. In that case, you would end up with no reservation.

The same recommendation holds if, after booking the airline reservation, you learn that the traveler needs to rent a car or reserve a hotel room. You should call the same travel agent who booked the airline reservation and issued the ticket.

When you call to book a different trip, you can call any of the agents to start the reservation process. You should then work with that agent all the way through the new transaction. →



Travel planners should work with the same travel agent all the way through a reservation process.

Reserve the Correct Size Car Through State Travel Office

Because state policy does not allow travelers to upgrade their rental cars at the airport, you need to be sure that you reserve the correct size car when you make your reservation through the State Travel Office.

One important reason for this policy is that the car rental agent at the airport might not put you back on the State of Utah contract after upgrading your rental car. In that circumstance, you would not have insurance coverage in the event of an accident.



When you pick up your car at the airport, **do not take out any insurance**, even if the rental agent says you are not covered. **If your car rental was booked through the State Travel Office**, you have full insurance coverage.

Also remember that state policy does not allow travelers or travel planners to book car rentals over the Internet or by telephone on their own. If someone violates this policy, the car will not be insured and any losses would be the responsibility of the department. All car rentals must be booked through the State Travel Office to use the state contract rate and to qualify for full insurance coverage. →